



Weekly Bible Study Resources

Weekly Bible Study Sunday School Workbook

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Designed for those in Junior High and beyond

For week of August 1 - 7, 2011

Note to Teachers: *The weekly Bible Lessons are a real smorgasbord of inspiring ideas. Obviously, in one hour it may be impossible to get through the entire Sunday School Workbooks. Because we have no way of personally knowing your students, our desire is to share sufficient nuggets of truth with you so that when you “break bread” together on Sunday mornings, you can select from an assortment of “goodies” the entrées that best meet the needs of your class. You certainly don’t have to consume everything at one sitting; just pick and choose what works best for your Sunday School pupils. — PrayerfulLiving.com*

Subject: Spirit

Golden Text and Responsive Reading

As was brought out strongly in last week’s lesson on Love, we continue along our earthly journey striving each day to better know and understand God. One of the ways of getting to know Him better is through an exploration of the synonyms; or, as last week’s lesson told us, the Scriptural names for God. In the two-week course of study many choose to take with an authorized Christian Science teacher, time is spent in seeing the relationship among the 7 synonyms. (This might be a good opportunity to talk with Sunday School students on the topic of what class instruction is all about and dispel the mystery that possibly surrounds it. We can plant the seed early on and share how class has enriched our own lives so that the students can begin to consider taking this step themselves when the time is right.) While the Bible Lessons on the synonyms deepen an understanding of each synonym, this week provides an opportunity to see the correlation between God as Love (last week), and God as Spirit. Recognizing the ties between these two aspects of the Adorable One strengthens the base from which to consider God and enriches one’s prayer much as the facets of a diamond add to the beauty of the stone as a whole.

Last week we learned that Love alone is Life. This week’s Golden Text tells us that it is the Spirit that gives life. So it follows that if Love is Life and Life is Spirit, then Spirit is Love.

I have often associated the word ‘animation’ with the synonym of Spirit because I like to think of a ‘spirited’ horse as being very animated and full of life. And it’s easy to see how that animation or vivacity that the horse expresses is a reflection of Spirit, God.

Are we showing the animation of God in all we do? Are we excited, vivacious, spirited about the activities in our day? About the ideas others present to us? That is a form of love for each other as well; which is a reflection of God, Love. So we can start to see how these synonyms work together to help us see our own completeness as ideas of God.

Continuing on with the Responsive Reading, Paul is explaining that it isn't human education or eloquence that he relies on to speak about God, but he is animated by Spirit who gives him the power to go about his job of demonstrating the power of God. It is the Spirit of God that gives *us* our "spiritual sense --- the conscious, constant capacity to know God." (S&H 209:31)

Section One

Here is one way to think about the story of creation in Genesis. You may want to ask students for their impressions or ideas gained through previous SS classes:

The things that God made are all of them thoughts, ideas, and not really 'things' at all. But so that we can imagine them better, the prophets who wrote these stories used all sorts of things that we know to show us what they wanted us to understand. So we need to translate 'things' back into 'thoughts' to get the true idea of God and the universe.

"In the beginning" just means that it always was and has been long, long before any of us knew anything about it. "Created" means made or thought. "The heavens" is what we know about God, and "the earth" is what we know about our true selves and our true surroundings. So, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" means that for always and always God has thought about Himself and about us and all that we can ever know that is true. (God's, Mind's, thinking is His 'reflecting' on Himself and us. So we *are* His reflection.")

When the story in Genesis 1 begins to us, we do not know very much, so it tells us that the earth was shapeless (without form) and void (empty) and dark. But God wanted us to know about Him and about ourselves, so God said, "Let there be light"---His thoughts---and at once there was light---understanding.

The manifold works that we see as the glories of earth and heaven reflect God's goodness in forms that we can presently understand.

Just as in last week's lesson, we read about God as the great "I AM"--a name that indicates God's identity—Mrs. Eddy tells us this week that Spirit is the name of the Supreme Being. How do both of these terms express ideas of quantity and quality? Can we think of infinity as the quantity of God? Can we think of His oneness as a quantity? Are those contradictory quantities? Can Oneness and Allness be the same?

What is the only substance? What are "things" made of?

The Glossary definition gives us another name for God and relates the synonym "Spirit" to two other synonyms. Which ones? (Oh! And there's the word "animating!")

(S5) Where does matter fit into the story of creation?

Do your students know the 3 omnis? How do these superlatives illustrate that God can never be limited to a particular individual, location, situation, building or physicality? (as brought out in last week's lesson as well.)

As a reminder, I'm quoting from the excellent Sunday School Workbook written last week:

In her Message for 1902, Mrs. Eddy writes on page 7:11,

"The Latin *omni*, which signifies *all*, used as an English prefix to the words *potence, presence, science*, signifies all-power, all-presence, all-science. Use these words to define God, and nothing is left to consciousness but Love, without beginning and without end, even the forever *I AM*, and All, that which there is naught else. Thus we have Scriptural authority for divine metaphysics – spiritual man and the universe coexistent with God. No other logical conclusion can be drawn from the premises, and no other scientific proposition can be Christianly entertained."

Isn't it interesting how this passage is just as relative to the name Spirit as to Love???

(S6) Wouldn't we all love to see ourselves as "self-complete?" When will we gain that sense of ourselves? How can you use this idea when you are feeling "self-conscious?"

Section Two

(B5) Here part of the Responsive Reading is repeated. How is it that God reveals Himself to us? How does he reveal our true selves to our consciousness? Are the five senses helpful in this effort to know God and the love that He has for us?

(S&) Mrs. Eddy asks these same questions in a different way:

- Can Deity be known through the material senses?
- Can the material senses, which receive no direct evidence of Spirit, give correct testimony as to spiritual life, truth, and love?

What is her answer?

(S8) How can we apply these ideas *specifically* to challenges we might experience or see others experiencing of the need to wear glasses; loss of hearing; or lack of energy? (No platitudes please, or "hecatombs of gushing theories...." (S28) S&H 366:31).

(S9) How is the warfare between the Spirit and flesh settled? (Note again the synonym used here, and keep it in mind when considering the citation referenced above from Section Six (S28)

What is spiritual sense? What is it good for? (S10) What qualities does it involve? (S11) We can add these qualities that we want to strive to express to the list from last week's lesson listed in Galatians 5:22, 23 and called out in the SS Workbook:

The fruits of Spirit are listed as: love, joy, peace, longsuffering (patience), gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance (self-control).

Reminder to check in with your class on this question: How have you lived one of these fruits this week?

Section Three

Why did Nicodemus come to Jesus “by night?” What told him that Jesus was sent by God?

How does the verse in Psalms (S7): “renew a right spirit within me” relate to Jesus’ admonition that a man must be “born again?” What does water symbolize? (purity)

How would you interpret Jesus’ story about the wind? Can we rely on our material sight to tell us where the wind is, or where it came from? Can we see it? How is the kingdom of God (heaven, harmony) like the wind? How can we discern (or “see”) it?

(S12) How are we baptized in Christian Science? Is it a one-time event? What does continual baptism do for us?

(S14) What annuls the claims of matter? How is this idea of supremacy related to the omnis we read about in section II?

(S15) If we think of Spirit as all action, and Life as all being, then consider Mrs. Eddy’s statement that “all being is eternal, spiritual, perfect, harmonious in every action.” Then Life is Spirit. How do we bring Life, not death, into our consciousness? Recall from Section I---the story of creation---what is light? (Understanding).

Section Four

- B9) What do you think it means to return “in the power of the Spirit”?
- Why did Jesus read this particular passage? To whom did it refer?
- To whom or what did he attribute his ability to preach and heal?
- Why did it make everyone mad? (See S17)
- In this story, Jesus came into Galilee in the power of the Spirit. How did he leave?

When did Jesus start to preach? (S17) What do you think his ‘pursuits’ included?

Many of us say that we don’t know enough; aren’t good enough Christian Scientists; need to study more before we can heal ourselves or help others. But think about the spirit of love that children have. They love unconditionally and are non-judgmental. Last week we read (S&H), “No power can withstand divine Love.” Have you read any articles in the *Sentinel* where young people have proved this in their lives? Share an example of when you were able to disprove the evidence of the material senses.

What are the two cardinal points of Mind-healing or Christian Science? (S18)

What gives you the power to heal? (S19)

(S20) This is a good sentence to memorize and have in your mental pocket to meet any challenge: "Rise... *nothing* can vitiate (spoil or destroy; invalidate) the ability and power divinely bestowed on man."

Section Five

Brian Hall explains this story well on page 8 of the July 25/Aug 1 Sentinel. He explains that the New International Version translates "a man had a spirit of an unclean devil" as "a man possessed by a demon, an impure spirit." Brian goes on to explain that Jesus healed the man by rebuking this demon. People wanted to avoid anyone who was *unclean*, but Jesus healed him by demonstrating the oneness and power of Spirit.

B12 – How long should we expect to wait for healing?
See also (S26)

Again, note the similarities between citations in last week's lesson on Love and the power of Spirit. "There is no evil in Spirit, because God is Spirit." Didn't we read a similar sentence regarding God as Love last week? And then again in (S26) Mrs. Eddy equates Spirit and Love.

(S25) In this week's lesson we have many specific directives as to how to heal as Jesus did. Point out that this one is in the chapter on "Christian Science Practice." Did Mrs. Eddy expect her students to heal as Jesus did and as she did? Which students? Are we her students today? Do her expectations apply to us? Did Jesus expect his followers to heal? Do his expectations apply to us? When? In this experience or the next?

This expectation is summarized in (B13) First Thessalonians.

Section Six

Quench not the Spirit.
Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.
Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.

Who in your class will "do it" --- practice the fruits of the Spirit this week in their own personal experience? We each have what it takes to do this: "the prayer of faith." (B15)

I'm going to steal here again from Ms. Van Eyck's wonderful SS Workbook from last week and revisit the questions she posed there and you possibly chose to discuss with your students last week. It is useful to have continuity in your discussions so that the ideas don't drift away. Here is what she wrote last week:

How do we pray, and what is prayer? These are excellent questions for our classes (and for each of us). Since we are talking about fundamentals in this workbook, you can't get much more fundamental in Christian Science than prayer.

Have we been praying for ourselves daily? Why is this important? With so many things on our daily to do list, why do we make time for prayer?

Ask your students to share how they prayed during the week for the two issues brought up last week:

- (1) The shootings in Oslo, Norway.
- (2) Problems in their own cities or communities.

We don't just come to Sunday School for nice words, to be entertained, or as a holding tank while parents are in church. We expect to be learning about Christian Science and how to heal.

How does S27 apply to us today?

In S28, Mrs. Eddy tells us that we "must not hide the talent of spiritual healing under the napkin of its form." What is a talent? (Webster defines it as an ability or gift.) "nor bury the *morale* of Christian Science in the grave-clothes of its letter." The word "morale" can be defined as 'the practice of the duties of life.' What does she mean by the grave-clothes of its letter? We need to each ask ourselves if we are doing this.

Again borrowing from last week's SS Workbook:

In No and Yes, page 7:16-20, Mrs. Eddy says,

"God has appointed for Christian Scientists high tasks, and will not release them from the strict performance of each one of them."

(S29) Here is another directive or key to healing that I love. It is not we who are doing the healing. What is it that enables us to demonstrate the rule of healing?
